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OFFICE OF THE DEAN

**Faculty of Natural and
Agricultural Sciences**

25th April 2010
Mr. Abbey M. Mathekga
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0001

Dear Mr. Mathekga,

PHD STUDY ON BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES:

Thank you for your request to conduct research and collect data in the Faculty of Agricultural and Agricultural Sciences. As you have explained your research topic: "Towards widening access in Biological Sciences: A case study of the University of Pretoria" will involved the development of a model to widen access in science related programmes (with special reference to Biological Sciences) to persons from underrepresented groups. I see no reason in principle why you should not have access to the Departments in the Faculty to collect your data. This letter is thus a statement of this. The faculty will however have to see the final project proposal to gage how much time and involvement will be needed on the part of the departments. The faculty is fully supportive of such research but cannot unnecessarily burden departments and especially HODs with additional tasks requiring large amounts of time.

Yours sincerely,

**Prof Brenda Wingfield
DEPUTY DEAN
RESEARCH AND POSTGRADUATE STUDIES**



P.O. Box 58653

Karen Park, 0118

Date:

Dear

Request to participate in an interview

I am a doctoral candidate at the University of Pretoria in the Department of Education Management and Policy Studies under the supervision of Dr Chaya Herman and Prof Mokubung Nkomo. My research project is about widening access in Biological Sciences at the University of Pretoria. The purpose of my research is to understand the possibilities and limitations of widening access in science programmes. Whilst the success of this study will contribute towards the completion of my doctoral degree, it will contribute in increasing enrolment numbers in the science fields at undergraduate level in institutions of higher learning.

It will be appreciated if I could enlist your support for this research and if you would be willing to grant me an interview. Your participation is voluntary and with your permission the interview will be audio taped in order to get the most accurate and complete record.

In order to maintain anonymity and confidentiality, your name will not be mentioned in the research report. The recorded data will be analysed by myself and may also be viewed by my supervisors. Transcripts will be made available should you wish to receive them so that you could check if what you said has been accurately captured. You may request that the audio tape be switched off at any time and you may also refuse to answer any question during the interview.

With your permission, I would like to follow up this letter with a phone call to make appointment to meet with you at your convenient time. For any clarity in this regard, you may contact me at 012 481 2916 or abbey200@gmail.com or my supervisor at 012 420 5665 or chaya.herman@up.ac.za

Yours sincerely,

Abbey Mathekgga



P.O. Box 58653

Karen Park, 0118

Date:

Dear Participant,

Consent letter for participation in an interview

I would like to request your participation in my research project of widening access to underrepresented groups in Biological Sciences. This study is being conducted for a PhD degree at the University of Pretoria in the Department of Education Management and Policy Studies.

The purpose of my research is to understand the possibilities and limitations of widening access in science programmes. Whilst the success of this study will contribute towards the completion of my doctoral degree, it will contribute in increasing enrolment numbers in the science fields at undergraduate level in institutions of higher learning.

I would like you to participate in an interview that will last for about 45 – 60 minutes. The purpose of the interview is to gather opinions to help me understand how access policy is developed and implemented at the University of Pretoria.

With your permission an audiotape will be used to record the interview in order to get the most accurate and complete record. You have a right to withdraw from participating in the interview at any time and there will be no penalty. The recorded data will be analysed by myself and may be viewed by my supervisors (Dr Chaya Herman & Prof Mokubung Nkomo). The data will be kept safely and securely for prescribed length of time for reanalysis and thereafter it will be destroyed. Your name will not be mentioned in any interview or report; however, you may be identified by code or pseudonym.

Thanking you in anticipation.

Yours sincerely,

Abbey Mathekga

I voluntarily give permission to be included and participate in this research study.

I agree to be interviewed by the researcher.

I would like to receive the interview's transcript: yes/no

Name : _____

Signature : _____

Date : _____

Interview schedule - policy- makers

The purpose of this interview is to solicit your views about access policy at your institution.

- 1) What does access to higher education mean to you?
- 2) Does your institution have access policy? If no, why not?
 - a. If yes, how is access policy developed in your institution?
 - b. What is your role in the development of access policy in your institution?
 - c. Can you explain how access policy is implemented in your institution?
- 3) What does underrepresented group means to you? (What is your understanding of the concept underrepresentation?)
- 4) How does your institution promote the course (recruit for the course) from the underrepresented groups?
- 5) How does your institution's access policy make provision for students from underrepresented groups?
 - a. Finance
 - b. Academic
 - c. Cultural /Social
- 6) How do you go about selecting students? (What is your selection process?)
- 7) What are the challenges that students have with regards to access into your institution?
- 8) What does your institution have in place to assist students to adjust to university life?
 - a. Financial challenges
 - b. Academic life
 - c. Cultural/Social

Interview schedule - 1st year lecturers in BSc in Biological Sciences

The purpose of this interview is to solicit your views regarding access policy at your institution as well as your opinion on the curriculum that is offered in your programme.

- 1) Tell me about your experiences of teaching 1st year Biological Sciences students? How long have you been teaching 1st year students in BSc in Biological Sciences at UP?
- 2) What is the student profile of your class?
- 3) Do you have any group of students that you enjoy teaching the most? Why?

- 4) What kind of challenges are you faced with in teaching of the 1st years in BSc in Biological Sciences?
- 5) What are the challenges facing students from underrepresented groups in this programme?
- 6) Do you have any group of students that you enjoy teaching the most? Why?
- 7) What is your role in curriculum design of BSc in Biological Sciences?
- 8) How does the curriculum address the deficiency of under prepared learners?
- 9) What is the success rate of students from underrepresented groups in your specific module/course?
- 10) Do you have any interaction or contact with the students outside the lecture? Give examples? (Promoting the course).

Interview schedule - students

The purpose of this interview is to solicit your views regarding access policy at your institution.

- 1) How did you know about University of Pretoria?
- 2) How did you know about BSc in Biological Sciences?
- 3) Why did you choose to register for BSc Biological Sciences?
- 4) Was it difficult to *get in* into UP?
- 5) What was the process like?
- 6) To what extent do you feel '*at home*' or welcomed in UP? Why or why not? Give me examples (by the lecturer, administrator, management, fellow students, the residence, etc)
- 7) Is there anything that you don't like about UP? And why?
- 8) How do you manage academic demands of the university?
- 9) Do you receive any support? If yes, please explain?
- 10) Are you happy with your academic performance? If no, why not?
- 11) What can help you to complete your studies on time? What stands in your way?

**Questionnaire for 1st year students in BSc in Biological Sciences at
University of Pretoria**

Purpose of this questionnaire:

This questionnaire is an instrument for data collection for the research project about widening access in Biological Sciences at University of Pretoria. The **purpose** of this research is to understand the possibilities and limitations of widening access to students from underrepresented groups in science programmes.

Instructions:

1. Please complete this questionnaire, it will take approximately 20 – 30 minutes;
2. Your responses will be treated with utmost confidentiality, however, you can add your name and contact details at the end of the questionnaire if you are willing to participate in focus group interview;
3. Complete the questionnaire by ticking the appropriate response and writing responses where relevant.

A. Biographical data

1. What is your gender?

Male	
Female	

2. Which of the following best describe your racial or ethnic background?

African	
Coloured	
Indian	
White	
Other (please specify)	

3. How old are you?

17 - 19 years old	
20 - 24 years old	
25 – years and older	

4. What is your mother/guardian's highest qualification?

Did not complete schooling	
Grade 12	



Diploma	
Degree	
Post graduate qualification	
Doctoral degree	
Other (please specify)	

5. What is your father/guardian's highest qualification?

Did not complete schooling	
Grade 12	
Diploma	
Degree	
Post graduate qualification	
Doctoral degree	
Other (please specify)	

6. Which of the following best describe the area where you live?

Urban	
Township	
Rural	

7. Did you attend secondary school in your area?

Yes	
No	

8. If **no**, which of the following best describe the area where you attended secondary school?

Urban	
Township	
Rural	

B. Educational data

9. How did you know about University of Pretoria?

My teacher /school	
A friend	
A relative/family member	
Newspaper	
Internet	
Other: (please specify)	

10. Are you participating in any university activities other than your studies?

Yes	
No	

If **yes**, please mention the activity/ies that you participate in:

If **no**, please explain why you are not participating in any of such activities.

11. What is the best experience of your first year at university?

12. What is the worst experience of your first year at university?

13. Why did you choose BSc in Biological Sciences?



14. How would you describe your experiences in BSc in Biological Sciences so far?

15. What kind of support do you get from the university? (e.g. finance, academic, cultural/social).

16. To what extent do you feel that you were prepared for university studies?

17. What are your future plans?

18. Would you like to participate in focus groups interview? If **yes**, please write your name and contact details in the space provided.

Name : _____

Email address : _____

Mobile number : _____

Thank you for your time and assistance.